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Marshal Tukhachevsky. The latter was primarily a soldier, but Blyukher was both soldier and political leader. Unlike Tukhachevsky, Blyukher was of proletarian origin – he had started life as a shop-assistant in St. Petersburg and had later become a metalworker – and his popularity with the Russian working class was secure. Unlike Tukhachevsky, Blyukher had suffered under the Czarist régime. He had joined the Bolshevik Party a whole year before the October Revolution, early enough to lay claim to the once so honourable title of 'Old Bolshevik'. Although only a private in the Czarist army in which Tukhachevsky had served as an officer, Blyukher emerged as one of the great military commanders of the young Soviet State during the Civil War. In 1918, by his remarkable expedition across the Ural mountains, he secured the victory of the Revolution on what was then the 'Eastern Front'. For this outstanding feat he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. He was the first person to receive this decoration.[13]

Blyukher's association with the Soviet Far East, which became the main reason for his prominence, started in 1921. He commanded that heroic march to the Pacific Ocean which included such momentous events of the Russian Civil War as the storming of the heavily fortified white-guard stronghold, Volochayevka, the capture of Khabarovsk, and the final liquidation of Japanese intervention.

For Russia as a whole the elimination of Blyukher meant that Stalin's last potential competitor, a man who might have easily become more popular than he, had gone. For the Soviet Far East it meant the end of a historic period and it also resulted in a rewriting of its past history. Naturally, Blyukher's real historic feats remained unchanged, but the régime did its best to strike his name from history as it lives on in the minds of the people, particularly in the minds of the rising generation. It is difficult to write the history of the Soviet Far East up to 1938 without mentioning Blyukher, but Stalin's historians have achieved this task. Blyukher's name is now left out of all accounts of the Russian Civil War. The first edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*, in its volume, Number 6, which was published in 1930, described Blyukher as 'one of the outstanding personalities of the Red Army'. The second edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*, which was published after the Second World War, did not mention him at all.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE N.K.V.D.

The reorganization of the 'Special Far Eastern Army' and the disgrace of its commander were followed by the abolition of the Far Eastern Territory. It may be argued that this latter measure was not especially prompted by the peculiarities of the situation in the Far East. The Soviet Government had gradually abolished all the original large

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636 administrative units, such as, for instance, the West Siberian Territory,
656 the East Siberian Territory and the North Caucasus Territory. The Far Eastern Territory was, however, the last to be affected by these administrative reforms, and then only after the purges there had been completed. On October 20th, 1938, it was decreed that the Far Eastern Territory would cease to exist and that two new 'Territories' would take its place, the Khabarovsk Territory, which still included the bulk of the former F.E.T., and the Maritime Territory, with Vladivostok as the capital. After the war the administrative splitting up of the Soviet Far East was carried further. In the west, the Khabarovsk Territory lost the Amur Province (administrative centre: Blagoveshchensk) and, in the east, Sakhalin was removed from its jurisdiction and made a self-contained province.

625 To consolidate the position of the party in the two new 'Territories',
433 a position so badly shaken by the purges, the government saw it necessary to strengthen the powers of the N.K.V.D., particularly the control which the latter exercised over several vital branches of Soviet Far Eastern economy. The full extent of the N.K.V.D. rule in the Far East was disclosed by the Soviet Economic Plan for 1941, a secret document produced for inter-departmental use, but not intended for the Soviet public and still less for foreigners.* It showed that the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs was a much more important organizer of certain industrial activities than the ministries nominally responsible for them. The plan revealed, for instance, that the N.K.V.D. controlled nearly 83 per cent of the coal output of the Khabarovsk Territory. Only 13 per cent of it was in the hands of the People's Commissariat for Coal (*Narkomugol*) and the remaining 4 per cent was split up between other ministries. In the field of timber production the N.K.V.D. did not hold the same monopoly. It provided 'only' one-third of the entire timber supply of the territory, slightly more than the quota allocated to the People's Commissariat for the Timber Industry (*Narkomles*). Another important sector of N.K.V.D. work was production of building material. Over one-fifth of the bricks produced in the Khabarovsk Territory in 1941 was to come from the Chief Administration of Corrective Labour Camps, one of the specialized agencies of the N.K.V.D. In the much smaller Maritime Territory the N.K.V.D. has little importance as an economic factor, except for the timber industry, where it tackled over 20 per cent of the whole production. But

* The full title of the document is 'Gosudarstvenny Plan Razvitiya Narodnogo Khozyaistva S.S.S.R. na 1941 god (Prilozheniya k Postanovleniyu S.N.K. S.S.S.R. i TsK VKP (b) Nr.' 127 ot 17 Yanvarya 1941 g.) – State Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R. for 1941 (Appendices to the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars and of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Nr 127 of January 17th, 1941.) The material on the economy of the Soviet Far East is contained in the appendices 371, 372 and 373, pp. 324–336.

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THE 'NORMAL' COLONIZATION

So far only those forms of colonization in the Far East have been mentioned which might be described as typically 'Soviet', ranging from the terror exercised by the N.K.V.D. to the exuberant enthusiasm of the Komsomol.* In addition, the Soviet Government has continued the normal, ordinary colonization which went on in Czarist times. The Soviet Government has provided a number of genuine incentives to make it worth while for Russian peasants and workers to go to the Pacific coastal areas. 167

The first important special measure for the encouragement of voluntary migration to the Far East was a decree which the government issued on December 11th, 1933. It freed the collective farmers of the Far Eastern Territory for the duration of ten years from all compulsory grain and rice deliveries to the state. It reduced by 50 per cent the compulsory deliveries of meat, vegetables, milk and wool, and in certain distant areas such as Sakhalin and Kamchatka these deliveries were abolished altogether. To the workers and technicians of the Far East the decree of December 11th, 1933, brought higher wages and salaries. The personnel of the Far Eastern mining industry received an automatic rise of 30 per cent, and all other categories of workers and technicians one of 20 per cent. On the same occasion the pay of soldiers of the Special Far Eastern Army was increased by 50 per cent, and that of officers by 20 per cent.

It seems that these 'Stalin Privileges' as they were called were not quite sufficient to attract settlers to the Far East. Another decree was, therefore, published on November 17th, 1937, which aimed chiefly at the encouragement of agricultural colonization. On the strength of that decree, groups of collective farmers going to the Far East were to be exempt from taxation for six years and to obtain state credits for fifteen years. The decree further pledged the state to pay 50 per cent of the costs of all buildings erected by the colonists. [651] [652]

So much for the legislation passed for the encouragement of colonization in the Far East. In practice, things proceeded very often on lines that are reminiscent of Gogol's *Dead Souls*. Each Soviet state authority or building organization in need of manpower for the Far East had its own small recruiting office in Moscow. Special recruiting agents were employed who were paid a fixed sum for every person whom they persuaded to take up work at a Far Eastern building site or factory. The usual tariff was thirty roubles per person, but occasionally the fee was

* Another special form of Soviet colonization in the Far East was the mobilization of Jews for the settlement of Birobidzhan. The author has described the failure of this experiment in *Russia and her Colonies* (London, George Philip and Son, Ltd., pp. 173–8).

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higher. Since the agents were remunerated on a 'piece rate basis', they were naturally interested in enlisting the largest possible number of people. One can well imagine that the recruiters made use of all sorts of glittering promises and also that they paid little attention to the character and abilities of the prospective Far Eastern colonists. The afore-mentioned Madame Khetagurova who exposed in a Moscow journal this 'recruitment racket', concluded her account laconically: 'And so it happened that quite a lot of scum was sent to the Far East'.[24]

Those consenting to go to the Far East as free workers received upon leaving Moscow or another city of European Russia a special bonus and a maintenance allowance covering the entire long journey from European Russia to their final place of destination. The total amount of bonuses and allowances thus earned might not have meant a great deal to a Western worker, but it was a considerable sum for the impoverished Soviet citizen of the 'thirties.' It was tempting and led to abuses. Quite a number of people cashed the special remuneration, went to the Far East, worked there for a while and got themselves discharged for reasons of health. Having returned to Moscow they let themselves be recruited once more for the Far East by another state trust and the whole game started again from the beginning.

The majority of the voluntary colonists who, up to the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, came to the Soviet Far East established themselves in towns. The two largest cities of the Soviet Far East, Vladivostok and Khabarovsk, therefore grew considerably. Between 1926 and 1939 the population of Khabarovsk increased from 52,000 to 199,000, and that of Vladivostok from 108,000 to 206,000.

As a consequence of the growth of the existing towns and the foundation of new ones such as Komsomolsk, Magadan and Birobidzhan City, the relation between the urban and rural population in the Far East changed to the detriment of the villages. In 1926 only 24 per cent of the population of the Far East lived in towns, but by 1939 over half of all 'Far Easterners' could be classified as 'urban'.

The encouragement of the urban population in the Far Eastern provinces led to neglect of agriculture. During the period of the First and Second Five-Year Plans the area under cultivation in the Soviet Far East diminished by over 20 per cent, from 2,848,000 acres in 1928 to 2,223,000 acres in 1938. Consequently, instead of providing more for the newcomers, the food supply for the Soviet Far East became more dependent on deliveries from areas thousands of miles away. This created an unsatisfactory situation not only from the narrow economic point of view but also from the military which demanded complete self-sufficiency in fuel, raw materials and food. Molotov himself proclaimed the principal of self-sufficiency for the Soviet Far East at the Eighteenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, in March 1939, and

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III

THE ABORIGINES OF THE SOVIET FAR EAST

101 There are about 60,000 aborigines in the Soviet Far East (excluding Yakutia and Buryat-Mongolia) belonging to over a dozen different nationalities. The ethnographers divide them into two main groups. The first group, the Paleoasiats, includes the Chukchi, the Koryaks, the Asiatic Eskimos, the Aleuts, Ainu, Nivkhi and Kamchadals. Of the second, the Manchu-Tunguz peoples, the most important are the Tunguz proper, or Evenki, the coastal Tunguz, or Eveni, the Nanai and the Udege. Politically and sociologically all these nationalities
563 must be considered as one single entity. The Soviet régime has treated them quite differently from the Korean, Chinese and Japanese minorities. As the small groups of aborigines are unable to handicap Russian colonization, the Communist Party has patronised them, and Soviet propaganda has always devoted a great deal of publicity to them, even at a time when there was complete silence about the Koreans and Chinese of the Soviet Far East. This does not necessarily mean that Soviet Russia has handled the problems of the Far Eastern aborigines successfully.

TWO VIEWS ON NATIVE POLICY

563 In the first years following the October Revolution the most authoritative
177 Russian anthropologists felt that the time had come to take special
656 measures to protect the Far Eastern and Far Northern natives from the pernicious influences of European civilization. Demands to that effect were voiced, in the winter of 1921–22, in the organ of the People's Commissariat for Nationalities, *Zhizn Natsionalnostei*. The most remarkable contribution to the problem of the small nationalities came from Professor Vladimir Germanovich Bogoraz-Tan (1865–1936), who had a profound knowledge of the problems of the tribes of North-Eastern Siberia, particularly of the Chukchi. Professor Bogoraz suggested that the Soviet Government should draw the lessons from certain experiments carried out in the native territories of Canada, the United States, Brazil and Argentina. It seemed vital to him that the mode of

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563 177 656 life and the living conditions of the primitive tribes should be protected against every influence on the part of their more civilized Russian neighbours, or even of other stronger non-Russian peoples. Russians, Bogoraz said, should not be allowed to make any use whatever of the territories inhabited by the 'primitive tribes'. They should not even be permitted to enter them. Exceptions were to be made only for three categories of people, first anthropologists and linguists, secondly certain persons who would render practical services to the territories, such as doctors and technicians, and thirdly the ideologists of the new régime. Professor Bogoraz warned against making any economic experiments with the natives. He said that such experiments would not enhance the welfare of the Far Northern and Far Eastern tribes, but would, in fact, undermine their existence.[1]

To carry out a systematic policy of protection of the natives Professor Bogoraz demanded the foundation of a special committee to be attached to the People's Commissariat of Nationalities. Such a committee was in fact founded with the prominent participation of Professor Bogoraz himself. It was the 'Committee of the North'. It had a huge bureaucratic apparatus consisting of five departments. The first dealt with administrative and legal matters, the second with economic and financial affairs, the third was concerned with scientific research, the fourth with health and the fifth with education. The Committee of the North had a Far Eastern Bureau in Khabarovsk which dealt with the small Far Eastern nationalities.

From the very beginning two tendencies made themselves felt within the Committee. People like Bogoraz-Tan viewed its work primarily from a philanthropic point of view. They thought that the Committee was nothing more than an organization to assist the Far Northern and Far Eastern peoples to recover from the blows which contact with European civilization had inflicted on them. Die-hard Bolsheviks, on the other hand, had a different approach. They considered the Committee to be an instrument of economic exploitation of the Far Northern territories, and for fostering class struggle among the tribes.

563 635 Their view did not prevail at once. In the first five years of its existence, between 1924 and 1929, the Committee did not interfere much with the tribal system of the Far North and Far East. The administrative pattern enforced in other parts of the Soviet Union was not extended to the small native peoples. Those living in the Far East were given such forms of local administration as were acceptable and comprehensible to them. Each tribe had a Tribal General Assembly ('Obshchee Rodovoe Sobranie') which elected a Tribal Executive Committee ('Rodovoy Ispolnitelny Komitet'). Several related tribes sent delegates to a Tribal District Congress ('Rayonny Rodovoy Sezd') which elected a Tribal District Executive Committee ('Rayonny Rodovoy Ispolnitelny

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Komitet'). The Tribal Committees of the lower order were later described as 'Native Soviets' ('Tuzsovety') of which there were 400 all over the Far East and Far North. The most remarkable fact about this tribal administration was that participation in tribal and native Soviets was not limited by class criteria.

This idyllic state of affairs could not last long. From one plenary meeting of the Committee of the North to the next the intransigence of its more radically minded members increased. In 1929 the Committee firmly decided to apply the principles of class struggle to the Far North, and from 1930 onwards, the tribal administration was abandoned. Regular organs of local government ranging from village Soviets to 'National Areas' ('Okrugs') were created instead. This meant in fact the end of the 'native reserves' which the Russian anthropologists had advocated in the early years of the Soviet régime. Under the new set-up Russian and other European Party and State officials were able to increase their influence in the running of native affairs. The natives were linked politically and administratively as closely as possible with the metropolitan territories of the U.S.S.R. In 1935, the Committee of the North itself was disbanded.

By the time of its abolition the Committee had lost a great deal of its previous importance. Many of its original duties had been taken over either by the Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route, 'Glavsevmorput', or by local government organs. The Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route, which had at its disposal a large staff of experts on nationalities problems, was originally launched as a body with extremely wide powers. Among other things, it was supposed to look after the well-being of the Far Northern tribes, direct cultural work among them, organize health services and help to promote their 'sovietization'. In the autumn of 1938 the Soviet Government decided that 'Glavsevmorput' could not carry out these tasks properly. A decree of the Council of People's Commissars stipulated that it was to hand over to the territorial administrations all enterprises and institutions which were not directly connected with the development of the Northern Sea Route.[2]

COMMUNIST ADMINISTRATORS

The abolition of the Committee of the North in 1935, and the curtailing of the powers of the 'Glavsevmorput' in 1938, increased the responsibilities of the administrative authorities and party organizations of Khabarovsk. It cannot be said that the latter have shown great enthusiasm for work in the National Areas and National Districts of the small nationalities. In fact, up to 1939 most of the officials posted to distant parts of the Far Eastern (later Khabarovsk) Territory went

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connection with the forced labour system. A sparsely populated territory on the Kolyma River and around the Okhotsk Sea, which, not so long before, had been the home only of Eveni, Yakuts and other natives, had suddenly become an object of mass colonization by convicts, probably by as many as 400,000. The sudden emergence of huge forced labour camps in tribal territories was bound to have a considerable effect both on the way of life and on the moral outlook of the natives. It is only logical that the N.K.V.D.-M.V.D. should have tried to enlist the support of the natives against camp inmates trying to escape. Former political prisoners have even asserted that the N.K.V.D. pays the natives, either in cash or in the form of vodka, for every escaped person whom they capture.[8] This makes it understandable that the prisoners extend their contempt of the N.K.V.D. to the natives. They charge the authorities with 'coddling and pampering' them in the very areas in which many members of Russia's intelligentsia are gradually being exterminated.[9] It must be said in fairness that the N.K.V.D. is not the first Russian authority to discover that use can be made of Far Eastern natives against convicts from European Russia. The priority for this idea goes to the Czarist governor of Sakhalin Island, General Konotovich. Chekhov, mentioned in his book on Sakhalin that the General had ordered Gilyaks (Nivkhi) to be employed as guards for Russian criminals.

THE REINDEER PROBLEM

Lack of understanding of the 'natives' is manifested not only by the activities of the big State trusts, but also in the day-to-day work of Soviet officials in charge of 'native affairs'. Communist Party officials think in terms of ready-made patterns, and cut-and-dried formulae. They are usually convinced that what is good for Moscow and Vladivostok must be equally good for the most remote parts of the Union. This frame of mind makes it difficult for them to find the right approach to the special conditions of the Far North. Much could be said, for instance, about the peculiar way in which Soviet authorities have handled the basis of Far Northern economy, reindeer-breeding. As late as 1950, the Communist Party of a Siberian province sent large piles of pamphlets on sheep-farming and bee-keeping to the nomads living near the Arctic coast, where there are neither sheep nor bees – only reindeer.[10] This actually happened in North-western Siberia, but it could easily have happened in the Far East. The *Pravda* correspondent in Khabarovsk stated in 1947 that there was not a single specialist in problems of reindeer-breeding in the State and Party offices of that city, although the Khabarovsk Territory includes the largest reindeer population of any administrative unit in the Soviet Union.[11]

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Soviet officials failed to understand that the reindeer plays a vital part in the life of the Northern tribesmen, and that it is not a mere subsidiary to their economy as is the cow of the Russian peasants. According to the tribal customs of the Koryaks and Chukchi it is a sin to sell a living reindeer. The Soviet administrators denounced this custom as sabotage, and imposed on the reindeer-breeders not only compulsory sales, but also the confiscation measures which accompany collectivization. The setting up of collective farms and state farms in the native territories of the Arctic regions of the Soviet Far East, led in the 'thirties' to the unleashing of a violent class struggle which, in turn, resulted in a drastic drop in the number of reindeer. Not only did the rich reindeer breeders engage in large scale 'predatory slaughter' of the animals, but they also hampered the collectivization and nationalization measures in other ways. To escape 'de-kulakization', they split their large herds into smaller ones, and distributed them among their shepherds. Moreover pastureland was wilfully destroyed, apparently on a considerable scale.

Loss of reindeer occurred not only in the private but also in the State-controlled sector. The new State farms which were to introduce higher forms of reindeer breeding were, in reality, far more inefficient than the individual reindeer breeding nomad. In the Far East the State reindeer farms lost one-third of their herds within a single year – a catastrophe which could not be attributed entirely to the infiltration of class-alien elements.

Official Soviet statistics about the development of Soviet Russia's reindeer population demonstrate convincingly what damage the collectivization measures caused. In the first years of the communist régime when state interference with the Far Northern economy was slight there was a clear upward trend. The number of reindeer in the entire Soviet Union increased from 1,765,000 in 1923 to 2,193,000 in 1926–27 and to 2,700,000 in 1931. The year 1931 was the turning point. In 1932 the stock fell to 2,333,000, in 1933 to 2,030,000 and in 1934 it was as low as 1,889,000. These figures which apply to Soviet Russia as a whole do not fully reveal the catastrophic consequences of communist reindeer policy in the Far East. In the Koryak National Area, for instance, where full collectivization had been planned for 1933, the number of reindeer decreased from 264,000 in 1926 to 173,000 in 1932 and 127,000 in 1934.[12]

Soviet statistical evidence about Russia's reindeer population after 1934 is contradictory. Figures produced by various official Soviet sources show a large margin of difference. The *Small Soviet Encyclopedia* says that on January 1st, 1938, the number of reindeer was 1,766,000.[13] This would mean that the situation was then even worse than in 1933. On the other hand, a Soviet standard work on Russian reindeer-breeding published in the post-war period claims that the number of reindeer in 1938 was 28 per cent higher than in 1933. But even this book which